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criterion and the librarian shall be content not to question it.

**THE PRESIDENT:** The next item on the program is a symposium on "Recent books for boys." Mr Bostwick has kindly consented to take charge of this symposium, and to him we are indebted for preparing it in its present very attractive form. Will Mr Bostwick add to his kindness by taking the chair?

### **SYMPOSIUM ON RECENT BOOKS FOR BOYS**

**CHAIRMAN BOSTWICK:** In this world of ours nothing is at a standstill. Everything moves. And to get a comprehensive view of anything we must not simply look at it as it is now, but must trace its progress and its alterations from year to year, and explain, if we can, the causes of change. We shall not know zoölogy thoroughly, for instance, if we understand all about lions, elephants and whales as they are now; we must know about their ancestry. As we look at a geological chart portraying graphically the rise, progress and decay of various forms of animal life we are struck with the fact that some one form is always predominant, though many others exist, some of which are increasing and others decreasing in importance. This is true not only of the forms of life in geologic time, but also of so many other things that it may almost be set down as a general law of existence.

Conditions change gradually; they become more favorable to one thing and less so to another, so that the former increases in quantity and improves in quality, while the latter lessens and deteriorates. Take, for instance, the vogue of games and sports. At one period cycling is in the ascendant, at another tennis, at still another roller-skating, while all three exist together at all times, in various degrees of popularity. This law applies also to the reading of boys. The stories that are written for them have generally some leading motive—war, athletics, camping, the sea, mystery, and so on; and the popularity of these various types has altered from year to year. I think most of us can re-

member, for instance, a time when the athletic type of boy's story, now so popular, and well represented by the books of Ralph Barbour, was almost non-existent. It is a development of the school type, which is very old. One of the best, of course, was, is, and always will be "Tom Brown," and we had many such books as De Mille's B. O. W. C series, Clarence Gordon's books, written under the pen name of Vieux Moustache, etc.

It was most natural, of course, that school life, which is important and so distinctive a part of a boy's career, should be taken up as a background for tales of boy life by writers. What is interesting for us to note here is that, as athletics has become a more important part of school and college life, it has also become more and more prominent in the school and college stories, so that we now have a distinct athletic type of story. The story, in other words, has responded to a change in environment. Those who object to the present part played by athletics in the life of educational institutions, will doubtless deplore also the rise in popularity of the baseball and football tale. To those who, like myself, regard it as a healthful development, the appearance of athletics as the theme of stories is commendable and interesting in itself as well as a striking illustration of the fact that the predominant theme in juvenile literature is a reflection of something that is, for the moment, in the air. Thus the period of the Civil War and immediately after it, was at the same time that of the predominant war story. Later came the success story, typified by Alger's poor city boys who stop the runaway horse and straightway marry the rich man's daughter. And the heyday of the wild west tale—Ellis and Castlemon—was coeval with the most rapid extension of our far western frontier.

This correspondence between what is going on in the world and the themes of fiction is noticeable, of course, in adult literature also. We have socialistic novels now, and muck-raking tales, where such things were unheard of even 10 years ago; but the phenomenon is more marked

in juvenile fiction, because with boys the matter of the tale is far more important than the manner. To grown-ups who have some knowledge of literary values the manner stands for much more. We linger fascinated over the pages of a writer who tells of ordinary doings in a brilliant way, whereas the boy is anxious only to ascertain whether Tom escapes the tiger's clutches, and how he does it. The author's treatment of the event is secondary, or rather, it is not considered at all.

In view of the fact that the history of recent juvenile literature is thus the history of the rise and fall of predominant themes, more or less dependent on the environment of the writers as well as the readers, it becomes necessary to widen somewhat the scope of the term "recent" in our title, and to review the history of the juvenile romance from a period to which that term may be applied only by contrast with what is ancient.

And first, I propose to inquire, what is the predominant and popular type of boy's story today? As a preliminary essay toward solving this question, the assistants in charge of 37 children's rooms in different parts of New York were asked to make a list of the 25 books of fiction most popular in their departments among boys 12 to 15 years old. These lists were made after careful consideration, and, of course, without any consultations between librarians. They thus represent very fairly the preferences of the children who use these different libraries—probably at least 50,000 in number. I have compiled from their reports three different lists. The first is a combination of the titles into a single order in which not only the number of libraries selecting a title, but the position of that title in the various lists, is taken into account. The second gives the titles in the order of the number of branches including each in the branch lists. The third is an author list, arranged in the order of the number of times that each author was mentioned in the lists, considered together.

#### List 1

Titles in the order of preference, taking into account not only the number of lists

on which each appears but the order of each in its list:

Stevenson	Treasure Island
Barbour	Crimson Sweater
Doyle	Adventures of Sherlock Holmes
Clemens	Tom Sawyer
Clemens	Huckleberry Finn
Defoe	Robinson Crusoe
Barbour	Behind the Line
Grinnell	Jack Among the Indians
Barbour	Half Back
Cody	Buffalo Bill
Drysdale	Fast Mail
Camp	Substitute
Ames	Pete, Cow-puncher
Scott	Ivanhoe
Kipling	Captains Courageous
King	Cadet Days
Henty	Redskin and Cowboy
Aldrich	Story of a Bad Boy
Pyle	Robin Hood
Dudley	Yale Cup
Dickens	Oliver Twist
Dumas	Monte Cristo
Verne	Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea
Cooper	The Spy
Stevenson	Kidnapped

#### List 2

Titles in the order of the number of branch list on which each appears:

Stevenson.	Treasure Island	32 branches
Clemens.	Tom Sawyer	21 branches
Doyle.	Adventures of Sherlock Holmes	21 branches
Barbour.	Crimson Sweater	19 branches
Stevenson.	Kidnapped	16 branches
Clemens.	Huckleberry Finn	16 branches
Defoe.	Robinson Crusoe	15 branches
Kipling.	Captains Courageous	14 branches
Barbour.	Behind the Line	13 branches
Verne.	Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea	12 branches
Camp.	Substitute	12 branches
Grinnell.	Jack Among the Indians	12 branches
Scott.	Ivanhoe	12 branches
Dickens.	Oliver Twist	11 branches
Aldrich.	Story of a Bad Boy	11 branches
King.	Cadet Days	11 branches
Cody.	Adventures of Buffalo Bill	11 branches
Barbour.	Half Back	11 branches
Ames.	Pete, Cow-puncher	11 branches

Cooper. Spy	10 branches
Pyle. Robin Hood	10 branches
Henty. Redskin and Cowboy	10 branches
Drysdale. Fast Mail	10 branches
Dudley. Yale Cup	9 branches
Dumas. Count of Monte Cristo	8 branches

**List 3**

Authors in the order of the number of times the name of each appears on all the lists taken together. The number of titles mentioned appears in the second column.

Barbour	90	16
Stevenson, R. L.	52	3
Tomlinson	47	17
Clemens	42	5
Dudley	34	6
Munroe	31	15
Doyle	28	5
Dickens	25	6
Grinnell, G. B.	25	6
Henty	25	12
Verne	22	3
Cooper	21	4
Drysdale	19	6
Scott	17	3
Otis	16	8
Defoe	15	1
Kipling	15	2
Pyle	14	4
Dumas	13	2
Camp	12	1
King, Capt. Charles	12	2
Malone	12	4
Trowbridge	11	9
Hughes, Rupert	11	2
Pier, A. S.	11	3

Making a preliminary attempt at the classification of List 1, we find that it contains 12 stories of pure adventure, 5 of athletics, 3 of history, 1 of school, 1 of railroads, 1 of mystery, and 1 non-historical adult novel. This would appear to put the story of adventure far in the lead. But I am not sure that we are not here comparing a class with sub-classes. There is hardly one of the stories in the list that may not be called an adventure story, using the word broadly. Sub-classifying the 12 stories classed as "adventure" above we have 3 of Indians and cowboys, 3 of miscellaneous boy life, 2 of the sea and 2 of imprisonment or escape. It would thus seem as if, while boys must have action and adventure in their tales, and would not will-

ingly sit down to read "Cranford" or "Our Village," they are at present fonder of the adventure that centers around school or college athletics than of any other kind.

It is a pity that we can not investigate previous years in some such way as this. It must be remembered, however,—we librarians do not always remember it—that there is much reading done outside of libraries. There is extra-library literature, including all books not borrowed from libraries, and infra-library literature, including all that are below the library limit. When a class of books that we know from various sources of information to be popular, is shown by library statistics to be unpopular, one of the first questions to be asked is: "What specimens of this class are infra-library?"

As a case in point, we will take the detective story, the favorite modern kind of mystery tale. It is rather surprising to find that only one volume of these stories (it is Sherlock Holmes, of course) is on our first list. We should have said, off hand, that detective stories would be very fully represented. Several explanations occur. Sherlock Holmes may be so popular that he has supplanted every other detective hero; or, there may really be a falling off in the liking for detective stories; or finally, the detective stories read by boys may be obtained elsewhere than from the library. They may be simply extra library; in other words, the boys may find Poe and Gaboriau and possibly Anna Katherine Green at home. Or they may be *infra* library—Old Sleuth, Nick Carter and their like.

Here I am able to report the results of an interesting experiment tried in our own children's department. The same story was told six times, in as many different parts of New York, to groups of older boys selected as typical of the neighborhood. After the story-telling, I talked with the boys and questioned them. The story selected was Poe's "Purloined Letter." The boys showed that they appreciated and enjoyed it. Of those in the six groups, possibly 200 in all, only one or two had ever heard of the story or knew who wrote it. Less than half a dozen had

read any of Poe's stories and in almost every case these had read "The Gold Bug" at school. (Reading a story in school, by the by, seems in most cases to be an effectual discourager of further investigation.)

Regarding acquaintance with detective stories in general, there was much difference between groups, although every boy of the 200 averred that he liked them. Every boy in one group (East 23rd St.) had read Sherlock Holmes, but in the others only a small minority had done so; on the lower East Side he was quite unknown. When asked what they had read and liked, most of them said "Nick Carter" or "The stories that come out in the Sunday Herald." Many of the boys reported that their parents had forbidden them to read detective stories, or that their teachers discouraged them. I am not sure, also, that we have supplied enough of this kind of literature in our children's rooms. This looks like one of the cases where an attempt to regulate children's reading has resulted unfortunately. We are apt to think that if we desire to control reading, all we have to do is to control the library supply. This may be attempted with some degree of success where the books are difficult to obtain or expensive, but where a cheap supply is available, cutting off the library supply simply drives the reader outside and may lower the general quality of his reading, instead of raising it. I would not have it thought that I intend any particular inferences from this note, which is somewhat discursive.

Let us dwell for a moment longer on infra-library literature for boys, which has scarcely received sufficient notice at our hands. Probably the generic terms with which we are most familiar are "Dime novel" and "Yellow-backed novel," neither of which are now particularly descriptive. "Penny dreadful" and "Shilling shocker" are English terms. We have it on the authority of Edward S. Ellis in the introduction to a new edition of his "Seth Jones," one of the earlier "Dime novels," that the first "Dime novel" was published in 1859 by Mrs Ann S. Stephens, already a popular writer of light fiction. The

series known by this name was projected by the Beadle Brothers and their associates, and their only idea seems to have been to issue inexpensive light fiction by well known writers. They were all edited by Orville J. Victor, a competent literary worker of unimpeachable reputation. These earlier dime novels included some good work. Later, a competing series was begun by George P. Munro, and the quality soon degenerated. The "Dime novels" no longer exist, but the name survives.

The chief difference between the best of these books and those by Optic and Alger is that the latter were more expensively printed. The one thing that they all have in common is, it seems to me, a lack of realism, especially in conversation, in particular, the hero always talks like a book. For instance, the sturdy woodman in the wilderness of western New York, who opens Ellis's book, "Seth Jones," named just above, greets an approaching stranger in this fashion:

"You are more than welcome; such men as you are too scarce in this part of the world for me to feel otherwise than glad when I see them; but one cannot be too vigilant in this lonely section, when more than one life is dependent upon his prudence."

Jones, the person addressed, is a character part, and a little more effort is made to cause him to talk naturally. Announcing himself as "Seth Jones, of New Hampshire," he remarks:

"The Joneses are a numerous family up there—they're getting rather too plentiful for comfort, so I migrated. Might be acquainted perhaps with some of the Joneses?"

This lack of attention to the probabilities of ordinary conversation, which appears even in the works of some of our best novelists, is still particularly noticeable in the didactic book for boys, which we still have with us in great quantity. There is still evidently an opinion afloat that the boy will not read to learn, or even out of curiosity, unless the curiosity is to follow up the links of a story. This is a misapprehension; a boy will read anything that interests him, and he will some-

times develop interest in odd directions. I have seen a ten-year old absorbed in Queen Victoria's diary and other things quite as queer.

The morally didactic story—the Miss Edgeworth tale and the Sanford and Merton type—seems to have gone out, though it lingered with surpassing splendor in the earlier Elsie books. Useful information was mixed with the morals in the Rollo books (which will live for their accurate pictures of New England life), and nowadays we have nothing but the information. In such stories as "Uncle Sam's Secrets," the story is the thinnest kind of a thread. The hero is arrested by mistake, simply in order that the reader, through him, may be filled up with court procedure and prison discipline.

One can scarcely make a separate class of these didactic books, because they run through almost all classes. The probability is that many of them would be just as popular and quite as useful if the thread of narrative on which the facts are strung were omitted altogether. This is beginning to be recognized, and we have some excellent information-books for boys, as well as some very inaccurate and bad ones. This, however, carries us beyond the realm of fiction, to which I had intended to restrict myself in this paper.

The didactic book is interesting because it appears to have been the first kind of book written distinctly for children. Originating in England, it passed thence to this country and quickly became differentiated according to its subject matter into stories that inform the readers respectively about history, applied science, animal life and so on. The story for its own sake came later.

In introducing writers who will treat a few of these types of stories separately, I have given the first place to MR KIRK MUNROE, and will ask Mr W. P. Cutter to read Mr Munroe's paper on

#### THE ADVENTURE BOOK FOR BOYS

Not more than one boy in ten thousand, even in our land of self-acclaimed civilization, is born a student; but that even

one is so born is a triumph over the innate savagery of humanity, transmitted through the heredity of a million years, and but feebly combatted by the enlightenment of a few centuries. The born student acquires reading as he acquires speech, no one knows exactly how or when; his absorption of knowledge is sponge-like; and, instinctively avoiding the chaff of literature, he seeks its golden grains with unflagging zeal. He becomes the joy of that librarian whose stacks abound in bulky tomes of "reference," and the despair of him whose shelves are devoted only to fiction and feeble expurgations. For a boy of this kind the "adventure" book is profitless; it does not appeal to him as a pleasure, nor does he need it as a stimulant.

In a world of students then, the "adventure" book would find small place; but in one emerging from primeval ignorance, inhabited by millions who do not know how to read, and others who never would have learned except under the stimulation of desire or fear, it plays an important part. Probably nothing so affects humanity as a good story, well told. Until recent years the most welcome guest at every court, castle, manor, and inn, was the strolling bard who held his rude audiences spellbound with tales or songs of high courage and mighty deeds. Thus, and thus only, was kept alive and diffused the faint glow of knowledge and an inspiration to better things that, for ages, dimly illumined the dark savagery of medieval ignorance.

Nor to this day has the power of the story-teller been curtailed, while his welcome is as warm as ever. Through regions vast and remote, where communication is scant, and where ignorance still reigns, he passes to and fro, a welcome guest, ever awakening and fostering the desire for better things. Even in lands already lighted by the rising sun of knowledge, the popularity of the story-teller shows no sign of waning. He may not appear in the guise of a strolling bard; but, in one modern form or another he always is with us, a prime necessity of our lives; for, in this age even more insistently

than ever before, arises the cry: "Tell us a story!"

Yes, tell us a story: but the tale that we demand must be one of human interests akin to our own, and it must deal with facts, probabilities, or at the very least, possibilities. Fairy tales are only appreciated, even by the very young, because of the human attributes with which all fairies are endowed; and they cease to prove of interest as soon as they are discovered to be impossible.

When we shall succeed in establishing communication with Mars, and discover its inhabitants to be a lot of jelly-fish, or disembodied spirits, without a spark of humanity, and absolutely unintelligent, according to our standards, shall we take any farther interest in them? I trow not! We will hasten back to our own world of human activities, and forever after leave the Martians to their stupidity.

Not only do we demand stories of humanity, but such as deal with our contemporaries. Thus the child is interested in tales concerning other children, the youth in the achievements of youth, the lover in stories of love, and the adult in records of business, politics, science, or of the myriad activities common to mankind in its prime. But always, to be thoroughly interesting, and at the same time stimulating, the hero of the tale must be somewhat in advance of the reader, just beyond present reach. That is, he must be a little older, a little braver, a little stronger, a little wiser, or a little something else that seems most desirable. So, to the child of four, we tell the tale of "Goody-Two-Shoes," who was six.

From four to ten is the credulous age, and the season of make-believe, when our literary aspirations find fullest expression in fairy lore and tales of magic. Then it is that we learn to read, that we may consort at our own pleasure with princesses and mail-clad knights, with giants and dragons, with fairies, gnomes, and those fortunates who are permitted to dwell in coral caves beneath the sea. At this glorified age we dwell in palaces more wonderful than ever were built, and when ready to travel, we are whisked from strange

country to stranger, on magic carpets. All these things are so real to us, and we believe in them so implicitly, that when, at ten or twelve, wisdom quickens its pace to the overtaking of credulity, and we see our long cherished substance turned to shadow, so great is our disgust, that in a moment the literature of childhood is contemptuously discarded.

For a time it seems as though there was nothing in the way of story-telling to take the place of that which has gone, and as though the long deluded, but now open-eyed, young person would never again regard the printed page with faith or favor. Now he is all for violent exercise, and strenuous out-of-door sports. He plays ball, rides, swims, rows, and goes in for junior athletic contests. For him there is neither time nor inclination for books. "Who cares for the stupid things anyhow? They are fit only for kids or old people, who don't know any better than to mull over them." But sooner or later there comes a day, when storm-bound or confined to the house by some minor ailment, our young agnostic mopes forlornly, or makes himself a nuisance by talking, in season and out, of the particular sport with which he just then is infatuated.

The hour of the "adventure" book has arrived!

Perhaps baseball is the one topic of the hour. As our disconsolate lad lounges through the sitting room, his eye is caught by a book lying on the center table. There may be a dozen other books on the same table, but he notes them not. He sees only the one with cover design in glaring colors, of a young athlete in baseball costume, swinging a bat and standing in the most approved position for hitting a three-bagger. On the cover also is emblazoned a title: "Out on First" or "The Hero of the School."

Instantly the bait is seized, and in another moment the boy, curled up on a window seat, has forgotten his recent discontent, and oblivious to all else, is absorbed by the fascination of this latest and most wonderful find. What a book it is, to be sure! How replete with incident and adventure, thrill and excitement! At

the same time what a mine of information regarding baseball, school athletics, and school life in general. Our youngster has always imagined he should hate school life; but, by the time he has finished "Out on First," and is recalling, with flushed face and sparkling eyes, its breathless situations, he knows that to go to just such a school has become his chief desire, and that even the amount of study necessary to pass an entrance examination, is none too high a price to pay for the privilege.

In this his first "adventure" book the young reader finds reference to another tale of school life, something about a fellow named "Tom Brown" that he determines to examine as soon as he can get hold of it. Thus is begun a sequence of adventure books that will lead on and on and on, until in later years, the boy who scoffed at books will be found reading, with eager interest, the stories of the truly great men of all ages, explorers, statesmen, warriors, writers, artists, inventors,—the men who have done things, and made the world what it is.

But it is during his school days that the adventure books appeal to him most; for not only do they form an agreeable complement to his studies, and stimulate him to farther research, but they tell him of the careers of other boys who have taken the very plunge into life's battle that he, shortly, must take. Thus he learns of what he may expect to encounter, of difficulties and how to overcome them, of successes and how to achieve them, of the rewards of truth, honesty, bravery, and right living, and of the bitter penalties attached to their opposites.

The ideal "adventure" book for a normal boy should, then, combine a thrilling interest with sound instruction; for, unless it contains the former no boy will read it, and without the latter it had better be left unread. But its thrills must be those of possibilities, and its instruction must be absolutely reliable, for no other book in all the world is subjected to such searching criticism. Librarians, parents, and teachers will criticize it before placing it in the hands of a youthful reader; while he and

his mates will criticize it most mercilessly of all, nor hesitate a moment before rendering the verdict of "Punk!" or "Bully!" that for ever after, seals its fate.

### HISTORICAL STORIES

CHAIRMAN BOSTWICK: When a boy that I know stumbled upon a fat little red book in dangerously small print, and, dipping into it, discovered that it was full to the brim with good things, he laid the foundation not only of a lifelong love for the "Arabian Nights," but of admiration for the Arabs as a race, and of some degree of sympathy for their modes of life and mental processes. I suppose there is hardly a historical fact in the whole book. I remember how surprised and interested I was when I learned that the Caliph Haroun al Raschid was a real person. And yet, such a book soaks one full of history. Reading it, one understands instinctively how and why the Arabs overran half of the world, and how they were discussing problems in the higher algebra when our precious ancestors were plunged in semi-barbarism. How much better this method than that which halts the story in order that one of the characters may give to another (for the reader's benefit) a brief résumé of the history of the country from the earliest times to the year 1563!

Historical fiction for boys seems to have developed from novels like those of Scott and Cooper. Written originally as much for adults as were those of Thackeray or George Eliot, they are now read largely by the young. Scott's long historical introductions are found objectionable by most boys, especially in these days of jumping in *medias res*. But Scott knew what he was about. He was writing for grown-ups, and he knew that it was necessary to prepare the scene before going on with the play—to soak the mind with a mordant before putting in the dye. The intelligent boy who once gets through one of Scott's introductions realizes how important they are, and will endure them patiently in view of the treat that is to follow.

## BRETTON WOODS CONFERENCE

Possibly the eagerness with which the boys of the last generation devoured Scott and Cooper, ostensibly intended for their elders, suggested the historical tale written especially for boys, as we have it now. At any rate, its writers have followed the plan of Scott rather than that of the "Arabian Nights." There is always something that corresponds to Scott's introductions, although they may be scattered throughout the body of the tale, and this brings them decidedly under the didactic heading. I have already queried whether the canned information in the didactic story would not be better and produce better results if given by itself. This query may be repeated in connection with the historical story, but there are some obvious answers to it. Writers of fiction know and recognize that they must be interesting or fail; writers of non-fiction unfortunately have never acknowledged any such obligation. They consider themselves at liberty to be prosy and have, indeed, almost turned that liberty into license.

There is some excuse, then, for a writer who wishes to impart historical fact, when he decides to string his hard and glittering beads upon the thread of narrative. We are prone to forget that the earliest and most praised histories were in reality little more than historical fiction. Writers like Xenophon and Livy aimed rather to create an atmosphere of verity than to report verbatim. Do you suppose that Xenophon's talk to the disheartened Greeks after the treacherous murder of their leaders, or the speeches of Livy's or Sallust's heroes on the eve of various contests were taken down in shorthand? So long as it does not sail under false colors, a good historical story is to be preferred to an inaccurate and prosy attempt at serious history or biography.

Our next paper is by a writer who has had no little success with historical tales that boys love and whose interest in library work is evidenced by his long membership in the Library commission of New Jersey. I take pleasure in introducing MR EVERETT T. TOMLINSON.

### THE HISTORICAL STORY FOR BOYS

I want to say that I have come up to canonize Mr Bostwick. Perhaps you didn't know he was Saint Bostwick, but I was brought up on a diet of the perseverance of the saints. The perseverance of Mr Bostwick during the past year in the numerous invitations he has given me to read a paper, has led me to believe that he belongs to that class. Therefore, as things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, I have put the saints and Mr Bostwick together, and you will remember from this time forward that this is Saint Bostwick, although instead of canonizing him, when I am done, you may want to cannonade him.

Three factors compose the problem of the historical story for boys—the boy, the subject and the book or the treatment of the subject.

**The boy.** One of the foremost sources of confusion in the appreciation of boy-nature is due to the fact that the genius instead of the normal boy is made the standard of judgment. Because certain geniuses in their boyhood read and enjoyed the masterpieces of literature, the conclusion is drawn that if other boys read the same great works they too will become geniuses. Mill might read Greek when he was nine, but it is a *non sequitur* to infer that if another boy is compelled to study the same marvelous language at the same early age he too can be made into a Stuart Mill. We are prone to spell "the child" with a capital C. Instead of rejoicing because our boys are not geniuses, but are healthy, normal, young animals, we are prone to select their studies and elect their reading with the genius in view. We think we know what they ought to like and then compel them to take it whether they like it or not. We confuse food with appetite. In the opinion of certain teachers, even the gems of literature introduced and memorized in the grammar grades, sometimes more nearly serve as an emetic than as a diet, because they remain fixed in the

memory of the child as a part of an imposed task.

Then, too, we confuse the production of a great writer with that of a wide reader. Reading, not writing, is the subject of the present paper. The course that has produced or aided in developing certain eminent writers is sometimes used as the standard for the development of extensive reading, whereas the two may be in no wise related. The food of one may be the poison of the other.

We all have our theories as to what is best for the boy,—especially if we have no boys of our own. Who has not pitied the boy left to the tender care of a spinster aunt? Who has not sympathized from the depths of his soul with the child of specialists in child study? From our own more extensive experience we are prone to read backward into boy life what is not there, but exists only in our fancy or our dreams.

The normal boy is neither a prig nor a prodigy; he is just a healthy, noisy, shouting, singing young animal. His maiden aunt may have "certain ideas" as to what is proper, but what does she understand? She has no children, but her confidence in her knowledge of children increases as the square of the distance from the probability of her ever having any. Her idea of deportment would make the lad into a priggish little old gentleman. Her conception of his proper garb, by comparison, would make a mummy dressed in the height of fashion. Often, too, her plan for his reading is fearfully and wonderfully made, just because she has thought of what *ought* to be in the boy instead of what *is* in the boy. If he is normal he prefers Samson to Shelley, and Jeffries to Swinburne. He would rather tell of the pitchers in the national league than hear of the virtues of the wise. He may be interested in the artistic touch in Rossetti's "Blessed Damozel," but the chances are he prefers a "damozel" who may be less blessed, but at least she is of flesh and blood and can readily distinguish the duties of the umpire from those of the short stop.

All this does not imply that the young barbarian is to be left in his barbarous tastes for reading or for food. It does imply that he can not be lifted bodily into a literary light. Jonah's precipitate departure from his unique conveyance is an act of grace compared with such a transference of young readers. Cod liver oil is most excellent, but, Mark Twain to the contrary, it is not to be classed with breakfast foods. What is sometimes termed "cultivating a taste" is often really cloying an appetite. What the boy is and does and likes cannot wisely be ignored. Sermons, provided they are safe, sound and not too long, are most commendable (perhaps it is safe to assert that more are commended than heard), but the normal boy does not begin his churchly career with an over enthusiastic delight in this means of grace. It is better to put the yeast into the bread before the bread is put into the boy.

**The boy's demands.** The normal boy demands a story. Sermons may be better, but not better for him. The Bible does not open with a scientific disquisition upon the evolutionary hypothesis of anthropological origins,—it begins with the story of Adam and Eve. Even the Great Teacher did not speak without a parable. This is the law of life. It is more, it is as vital as breathing.

In his story the boy demands action. He wants no involved plot, no introspective analysis. "Something doing" is more than slang, it is a demand. For him the tale is not adorned by an implied or appended moral. He wants no tail to his tale. Even when the boy is quiet he wants his heroes to be doing things. Now this is the secret of the appeal of such books as "Deadwood Dick" and "Slim Sam the Sleuth." I am not condoning the reading of these terrible tales. I am claiming only that the philosophy of their appeal shall not be ignored.

"Is it true?" This question is one of the foremost in the boy's category. Fairy tales or "Arabian Nights" may be read by him and enjoyed, but they are not masquerading. Truly they are lies, and the

young reader is content. But there is to be no sailing under false colors. The story must be true to life, but not too good to be true.

It must appeal to his imagination. He may not be able to define this demand, but it is as real as his hunger, although he may be unable to name one of his digestive organs beyond his stomach. The appeal of the book must be based upon what he comprehends, but it must be also a little beyond him. This is the reason why stories of life in boarding schools are more popular than those of the public schools, of college life than of day schools. Even his response to the mock heroics of scalping Indians is based upon this fact. The boy is a natural hero-worshipper and his heroes are mainly those of his own land. He is intense in his patriotism and a lover of war because war is a time when heroes are made and things are done. In a large class of newsboys in one of our greatest cities Washington was voted the most popular character of history, Napoleon was second choice.

**The historical story.** That the historical story does appeal to boys statistics prove. At first, it is true, it may not find a response so immediate as that given the book which deals with a special interest at the time, like football or athletics, but for a steady and continued interest it easily leads. An investigation in one of our largest city libraries was recently conducted in the following manner—a slip of paper was handed each boy as he entered and he was requested to write the titles of six books recently read and most enjoyed. Of thirty-five boys who responded, seventeen placed an historical story first in the list. Some books appeal for a time, the historical story appeals for all time. Fifteen years after its publication a certain historical story was reported at the head of the juvenile books most in demand at the New York City public libraries. The vitality of this class of stories for boys is apparently pronounced.

The cause is not difficult to find. Whether there be athletics, the rules of the game change; whether there be sto-

ries of school life, the buildings crumble and new generations of boys appear on the campus; but history never faileth. It contains the elements of the permanent, the heroic, the patriotic, the vital, which are eternal. Washington is never out of date, Pontiac and Tecumseh do not pass from the stage, Farragut and Perry are not vanishing figures, Plymouth Rock is a foundation not easily shaken. But the book must be more than a record of events, it must contain action; not mere facts, but a story. It does not glorify war, but it magnifies the heroic and the lessons taught by victory or defeat. Indeed all true history is a record of war. It is the story of man's contests with nature, with men and with himself. It places a value upon the liberties of the present by teaching the price that was paid for them, for the historical story is not merely one of adventure, but also of that which is heroic, patriotic, historic, true. The influx of peoples who have no comprehension of the price paid for liberty in America intensifies the value of stories that deal with national foundations. In my own State of New Jersey fifty-two per cent of its inhabitants are of foreign birth.

**The treatment of the subject.** The historical story must be more than a recital of facts; it must make actions and actors vital and vivid. It is historical without being mere history. Its setting must be in verified facts; the story is of action. It is personal rather than biographical. Indeed this is the universal demand of editors as well as of boys today. The book must recognize the fundamental requirement of the boy that it be true, interesting, inspiring, and instructive; but the instruction must be like a skeleton,—covered with flesh and blood. Only lobsters and similar creatures have their bones outside their meat. The highest purpose of the historical story is served when it becomes the vestibule through which the young reader, boy or girl—for girls read these stories almost as much as boys do—enters into the spacious abodes of history itself.

**Methods of preparation.** Perhaps I may be pardoned and my object will not be misunderstood if, in discussing the final phase of the subject, I reveal some of the methods employed in the preparation of these books. Given the desire to prepare for boys and girls certain books which shall be inspirational, but introductory and preparatory rather than final, which shall be instructive, wholesome, interesting, true in the lessons they imply and teach, and yet shall be looked upon only as steps to higher planes both in literature and history, what laws must be observed?

1. The book must be written by a lover of boys. There can be no divorce between the lover of history and the lover of boys. If one does not look upon the normal, healthy boy as the most fascinating object in creation let him avoid the task as he would shun poison. The love of the story and of the boy are as essential as the love of history. The facility of the story-teller may be developed but it never can be implanted.

2. The historic material used must be verified and every place described must have been actually seen. The psychological gulf between what one has seen and what one knows only by hearsay is unconsciously detected and is as impassable and fixed as that which separated Dives from Lazarus.

3. It is the boy's point of view which must be held steadily before the writer. His own may perhaps be wiser, but it cannot be substituted. In my own labors I have endeavored to keep constantly in touch with the boys themselves. Certain manuscripts or chapters are put to the actual test of the boy's judgment before the copy is sent to the publishers. A frequent method adopted has been for my wife to read aloud to my own boys, while I sat in an adjoining room unobserved, but not unobserving, listening to comments, and, above all, watching for manifestations of interest or disapproval. The experience of librarians; the knowledge of clerks in department stores; watching boys at their games; listening to their own

comments; their judgment as expressed in letters written to authors are all supplementary aids of great value.

4. The questions and personal experiences of boys are suggestive because the boy's point of view must never be ignored. For example, in gathering the material for certain historical stories my own boys, lads at the time, scoured the regions with me. Battlefields were visited, the routes of the armies followed, the "oldest inhabitants" were talked with and many an unpublished tale of early days run down. Questions the writer would never have thought of asking were asked by the boys with a result that was both interesting and suggestive.

5. Old newspapers, old books, scrapbooks, family records, have provided valuable material which no history has ever recorded. When it is known that a man is interested in special lines the world combines to aid him. "Unto every one that hath shall be given." A scrap-book compiled by an early commander at Sackett's Harbor, a true story of an ancestor who swam across Lake Champlain just before the attack on Ticonderoga, the personal records of one who for two years was a prisoner on the old prison-ship Jersey, the diary of men who participated in the Tea Party at Greenwich (N. J.), in 1775, the early printed tales of adventures with the pine robbers and with the son of Ben Franklin, the last royal governor of New Jersey, have been among the valuable gifts thus received.

6. The search is for the true and the valuable set in that which is interesting; for the informing but without losing sight of the inspiring; for the stirring and unusual but not for the improbable. The story, it is true, later may be read for its own sake, but even as a story the historical tale has failed of its highest purpose unless it arouses and stimulates interest in that which lies beyond its borders. The historical story should be the connecting, though frequently missing, link between the boy and the history of his own land. It may not develop a genius, but it may do better still, it may arouse

admiration for a true man. It may not, indeed ought not, to glorify the battlefield; but it may assist in cultivating courage, devotion to ideals, and, above all, a true estimate and proper valuation of what his heritage as an American is. In other ways and in different contests, by his reading the tales of his forefathers' days and deeds, the boy may be inspired to hold up those principles which they at cost of life and limb so worthily upheld. "I, too, am an American and a citizen of no mean country."

**CHAIRMAN BOSTWICK:** Although we are the American Library Association, we must occasionally extend our horizon beyond this continent, and even beyond the seas that encompass it. There are English-speaking and English-reading boys in the mother country. Has their different environment, varying like ours, but in a different way reacted upon the course that their literary preferences have taken? Do they now find themselves at the point where our own youngsters have arrived? We are fortunate in being able to listen to testimony along this line presented by Mr Robert Irwin, of the Hulme Branch, Manchester (Eng.), public libraries.

The conclusion that I draw from it is that English boys, in their preferences, are now passing through a stage in which American boys found themselves ten or fifteen years ago. Many of the authors mentioned by Mr Irwin as most popular were also once popular here, but have been superseded. And in particular, although school stories are still widely read in England, apparently the purely athletic story has not yet appeared on the field, or if it has, has not appealed to English boy readers. MR IRWIN'S paper will be read to us by Mr Carl B. Roden.

#### BOOKS READ BY ENGLISH BOYS

The task of deciding as to which are the most popular boy's stories in England today is somewhat difficult. The schools play a prominent part in encouraging the reading of healthy literature, for in most of them a small library is generally a feature, which is usually supple-

mented by most of our public libraries. Teachers are also paying a great deal of attention to the reading of their scholars, and very often the officials of the various libraries are somewhat startled by the constant demand for certain books, which have been specially recommended to the boys. Often these books have some special bearing on the school studies, and the circulation of high class stories must have a considerable effect on the education of the young. A love of reading may be created, and if persevered with, form the strongest antidote to the "penny dreadful." The interest which the teacher desires to arouse is here created, and the boy, far away from irksome restrictions, yields himself up to the reading of the book with delight. In this way the reading of "Ivanhoe," by Sir Walter Scott, "David Copperfield," by Charles Dickens, and "Westward Ho," by Charles Kingsley, have been encouraged by the teachers, and may in a measure account for their increasing popularity among our boys of the present day.

It may truly be said that the majority of English boys appear to follow Dr Johnson's advice, in reading those books which divert and interest them. Self-confident, ambitious, and full of the spirit of mischief, they naturally revel in those narratives which thrill the imagination with stirring adventures on land and sea or stories of school life. There is in most boys a spirit of romance and chivalry, and a perusal of those books wherein descriptions of most of the famous heroes or deeds are portrayed, tends to keep alive this worthy spirit of emulation.

That well known story of school life, "Tom Brown's School-days," by Thomas Hughes, still appears to exercise the same fascination that it did a number of years ago. Nearly all our popular school stories have this as their prototype, and the moral influence which "Tom Brown" has wielded upon the present generation can hardly be over-estimated. That masterpiece of creative imagination, Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe," with its Swedish imitation, J. R. Wyss's "Swiss Family Robinson," enjoy almost the same

popularity, and it is satisfactory to note, that books of such high character must yet be included in the most popular boy's stories of the present day.

In our public libraries, there is no doubt that George Alfred Henty holds the premier place as a writer for boys. Most of his books have some basis of history, and he has contrived in his ninety volumes, to tell of the greater part of the memorable events in the world's history. As a rule the titles of his books generally convey to the reader some information as to their contents, and you can always depend on a bold dashing hero who survives some remarkable escapes, whilst the villain always receives his due punishment. In a thoroughly entertaining manner the characters of history are depicted in his stories, giving as far as possible, true pictures of the people and period about which the story is written, clothing his characters with such personal reality, that one might almost be a spectator of the varied incidents which occur in the narrative. The boy's curiosity is aroused, and in many cases a desire is created to know still further about the historical hero. More authentic histories are then searched through, and some part of the history of the world is made, at any rate, more familiar than before. I have been assured by the proud mother of a young hopeful who had just secured a school scholarship, that the reading of this writer's books had been of inestimable value to her boy, as the stories had fixed in his memory many historical facts, which might otherwise have escaped him.

Captain F. S. Brereton has followed in the footsteps of Henty, and this writer may in time seriously challenge his supremacy. With his "A Soldier of Japan," "A Hero of Lucknow," "In the Grip of the Mullah," he has already achieved considerable popularity and his books have a constant circle of admirers. As, however, this writer can only produce two or three books each year, and I hardly dare venture to inquire as to how many volumes a boy can read in that time, it follows that the affections of the boys are generously divided. Herbert Hayens with

"Paris at Bay," "Scouting for Buller," "Captain of Irregulars," etc., and Herbert Strang with "Kobo," "Brown of Monkden," "Boys of the Light Brigade," meet with their hearty appreciation.

In George Manville Fenn's large collection of stories, a boy has plenty of variety to choose from, and is bound to meet with something that appeals to him. In "Burr, Junior," and "Quicksilver," with their telling descriptions of school life, "Patience Wins," relating to the struggles and trials of a boy's first introduction to industrial life, "Nat the Naturalist," with his adventures in the Eastern Seas, "Diamond Dyke," a story of South African adventures, "King o' the Beach," a tale of the tropics, etc., a boy can wander in imagination all over the world, and I believe that a well-known London librarian confesses to being under a debt of obligation to this writer for his first knowledge of some little known country, which was described in one of his stories.

Gordon Stables is another author who writes on similar lines, and his "Pearl Divers," with its descriptions of the country by the Sargasso Sea, "For Cross or Crescent," an account of the days of Richard Coeur-de-Lion, "In Far Bolivia," "Remember the Maine," a story of the Spanish-American War, all combine to impress upon their readers, the notable events and places of the present and past.

"King Solomon's Mines," by H. Rider Haggard, a story which treats of a search for hidden treasure in the unknown African regions, and Mark Twain's "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn" show signs of their popularity by never remaining long on the shelves of any library, as they are immediately called for by the readers. Dean F. W. Farrar showed his appreciation of the value of "Tom Brown's School-days," by writing "Eric," "Julian Home," "St. Winifred's." In these books the same high ideal of school life is inculcated, and although the young heroes may to critical readers appear somewhat priggish, yet this qualification does not interfere in any way with the demand for his books. Other popular writers about school life are: H. C. Adams, "Fighting His Way,"

"The White Brunswickers"; Harold Avery, "Dormitory Flag," "Triple Alliance"; Andrew Home, "Exiled from School," "From Fag to Monitor"; T. Baines Reed, "Fifth Form at St. Dominic's," "Willoughby Captains."

Stories of the sea have ever a charm for boys, and "Treasure Island," by Robert Louis Stevenson, still exercises its wonderful charm on their imaginations, and remains yet one of the most popular favorites. Captain Marryat, with "Peter Simple," "Jacob Faithful," "Midshipman Easy," and W. H. G. Kingston, with "From Powder Monkey to Admiral," "The Three Midshipmen," "Hurricane Hurry," still recall glimpses of naval life before the advent of the steamship; whilst in Jules Verne, the imagination has full play with "The Mysterious Island," "From the Earth to the Moon," "Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea," etc. The books of these writers along with those of Henry Collingwood, appear to be the favorite sea stories, and the latter writer with, "The Congo Rovers," "The Pirate Island," "The Log of the Flying Fish," pictures the days when sea pirates were more numerous than now, and amongst other things, delves into the hidden mysteries of submarine and airship.

The recent formation of Baden-Powell's boy scouts in England, will perhaps account for the increasing popularity which has lately attended the works of J. Fenimore Cooper, dealing with stories about the American Indians. His "Leather-Stocking" series are yet considered to have no equal in this particular kind of story, and whilst some of the characters might be considered perhaps too idealistic, his descriptions of the cowboys, the Red Indians with their different tribes, ranch life, etc., show that the author spared no pains to make his stories as true to life as is consistent with romance.

E. S. Ellis, another writer about the Indians, has in the "Deerfoot" series shown that there is plenty of material left to captivate his youthful readers, and he has already written well over thirty volumes about them. Captain Mayne Reid, with "The Headless Horseman," "The Death

Shot," "Rifle Rangers," and R. H. Moncrieff, with "The Wigwam and the War-path," have also written very successfully in this line.

There are, however, many books, magazines, and papers read by boys, which they do not obtain from, or see in public libraries. Some idea of this reading may be got from the books and papers which are sometimes asked for at the libraries. But the literature they read in connection with public libraries is necessarily that provided for them. Only such literature is provided for young readers, as in the opinion of the librarian is considered suitable. Periodicals of a character like "The Boy's Own Paper," "Chums," "Young England," "The Captain," "St. Nicholas," are usually provided in the reading-rooms, and amongst these the young folks browse with varied expression of interest.

James Grant's "British Battles," Rev. W. H. Fitchett's "Deeds that Won the Empire," etc., though hardly stories, strongly appeal to their sense of patriotism, and any works dealing in an elementary manner with engineering, joinery, natural science, etc., are sought after by many. It is necessary that these books should be well illustrated. The desire to win in the battle of life has not yet obtained that hold which one expects to find implanted later, and therefore those books which instil business virtues and moral instincts, such as Samuel Smiles's "Self-help," are left severely alone by the boys.

The limits of this paper have not allowed me to give more than a cursory notice of our most popular boy's authors, but in the juvenile catalogs published by nearly all our public libraries, the names of many additional authors and titles are given, along with suitable works on history, literature, natural science, etc. Publishers have also recognized the necessity of catering specially for the young, and catalogs are issued periodically of the books suitable for children. In these lists a boy, whatever his taste may be, can calculate to find something which will instruct or amuse him, and if an interest in good literature can be aroused, then one of the main objects of the library has been attained.

CHAIRMAN BOSTWICK: It seems to me that one of the most interesting things in Mr Irwin's paper is the increasing popularity of Cooper in England. I think few of us realize, perhaps, how very widely Cooper has been read for a great many years.

Some one stepped up in front of the books for boys the other day and said, "Will you please tell me why this collection of books for boys is brought here to a convention of grown people?" I inquired of the assistant who has charge of them and she tells me that the circulation has been quite large. A number of people who are present must have read some of these books or glanced them over, at least, perhaps for the first time.

We have a few minutes still left. Suppose some of you tell us of something that has struck you in looking over these books. If no one seems inclined to do so, Mr President, I think you may consider this symposium closed.

THE PRESIDENT: We thank you very much, indeed, Mr Bostwick, for this most interesting addition to the program which has been made by you and your collaborators, whom also we cordially thank.

The Chair must ask your attention to a single matter before we consider the reports. As many of you remember, a suggestion was made last evening at the general session, that the by-laws which were then adopted should be referred to a special committee which might revise them with a view to removing any verbal inconsistencies that might have crept into them or that might have remained in them and escaped the vigilance of the Association last night. This suggestion was a usual and a very reasonable one, but it was not adopted; perhaps through fear of interfering with the successful closing of this meeting. If that was the motive the Chair must express his gratitude for it. At the same time, you know that a great deal of work has been done during these last five days. Not only have you successfully grappled with the new Constitution and with the by-laws which are appended to it, but you have gone through with a tolerably exacting program, while

both the Executive board and the Council have been pretty hard worked. It would be unfortunate if as a result, not of their haste, but of their fatigue, any verbal inconsistencies should finally mar what they have tried to make a thorough and conscientious piece of work.

In order to guard against such a contingency the Chair has resolved to ask you to give effect to a resolution which is, in purpose, practically identical with the suggestion that was made last night, viz., to authorize the incoming Executive board to make such changes in the text of the new by-laws—not the Constitution, but the by-laws—as may be necessary to eliminate verbal inconsistencies, should any be found. If such a motion is proposed now, the Chair will gratefully entertain it.

MR YUST: Mr President: I have been requested to present the following resolution—That the Executive board be, and it is hereby, authorized, previous to the first publication of the new by-laws, to make such changes in the text thereof as may be necessary to eliminate verbal inconsistencies, if any such be found."

As stated, I present this because I have been requested to do so, and not that I think that this will in any way remedy the fundamental defects which have been incorporated in the Constitution and the by-laws.

THE PRESIDENT: All the Chair asks for is authority to remove verbal inconsistencies.

(The resolution was adopted.)

There is now an opportunity for the presentation of certain resolutions.

MR G. F. BOWERMAN: Mr President: I am sure that many of us, during the course of this meeting, have been very sorry, in fact, we have been somewhat disconcerted, to learn that Mr Post, the Superintendent of Documents, will cease his term of office in a very few days. It seems fitting that some resolutions on the subject of his withdrawal be presented at this time. A somewhat similar resolution, with some verbal modifications, was unanimously adopted at our meeting of the National association of state libraries and the Government documents section of the Ameri-